

1634
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S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE THE

Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company,

ON THEIR

CXCVITH ANNIVERSARY,

JUNE 2, 1834.

BY REV. F. H. HEDGE.

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BOSTON, JUNE 2, 1834.

VOTED, "That the thanks of the Corps be presented by the commissioned officers of the past year, to the Rev. MR. HEDGE, for his able and appropriate discourse, this day delivered by him before the Ancient and Hon. Artillery Company, and that a copy thereof be solicited for the press."

From the records,

J. H. WHITMAN, CLERK.

Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company.

S E R M O N .

ROMANS VIII, 19.

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."

The occasion which has now brought us together, has claims upon all who feel an interest in the early history of this Commonwealth. The anniversary, which we celebrate this day, is among the oldest that our annals record; it carries us back through two centuries of revolution and improvement to the first planting of New-England, — that day of earnest expectation, when a new manifestation of the sons of God was believed to be at hand.

Your institution, gentlemen of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, connects you with that period, which may, emphatically, be called the heroic age of our country; an age, when manhood and individual worth possessed an influence, which they can command only in the infancy of nations. Your charter has come to you from brave and godly men, who, in an age of depravity and misrule, were called to exhibit, in this far corner of the earth, the novel spectacle of a nation founded in truth and righteousness: — men, who, though they dreamed

not of glory, are become exceeding glorious in our eyes, — who, though they toiled not for fame, have earned the brightest that earth affords.

There are periods in the progress of society, when new prospects of social happiness unfold themselves to the philanthropist. The great hope of humanity, the hope of infinite progress, is never entirely extinct: now and then it breaks forth through some long eclipse of history, and becomes a guiding-star and a bright augury to coming centuries. It may be the discovery of some new principle in the natural or moral world, that awakens this hope; or it may be kindled by the ministry of some pious reformer, or by a whole generation of reformers, as at the founding of these colonies: whatever the cause, the effects are blessed; a new interest is felt in the destination of man, and a prophecy of better days is abroad in the earth. In the contemplation of such periods, the passage of scripture, which I have selected for this occasion, will not be thought misplaced. “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God:” in other words, — the world is eagerly awaiting that better state of things which the reformers sent by God, are about to effect. At the time when these words were written, the most abandoned of tyrants was seated upon the throne of the world.* It was a period of deep corruption, of universal woe, — a season of despair to most men, and of fiery trial to the few in whom a better faith precluded despair. In the strong lan-

* The epistle to the Romans was written while Nero was emperor.

guage of the apostle whom I have quoted: “the whole creation groaned and travailed together” in helpless anguish. In the midst of this darkness, there sprung up a race of men, such as the world had never seen before, — men, born of the spirit, and baptized with fire, — a band of reformers, who, in the midst of corruption, maintained a blameless conversation; in the midst of superstition, worshipped the true God; in the midst of a selfish and luxurious generation, devoted themselves to hardship and death. These were the sons of God, sent to reprove and redeem the world; and soon the world was filled with the glory of their manifestation, and with the fruits of their ministry. Thus it hath ever happened, that the most corrupt ages of the world have witnessed the loftiest manifestations of faith and devotion; whenever the frame of society is most diseased, the remedy is near.

It was at a period scarcely less gloomy in its moral aspect than the one just mentioned, that the Fathers of New-England entered on their mission. The expectation of mankind was again awakened, and anxious eyes were turned toward these preachers in the wilderness, as if the kingdom of Heaven were at hand. And how was it possible to contemplate, with an interest less affectionate, an enterprise like theirs? A colony of civilized men, sent forth from the midst of civilization, to cast their seed upon an untried shore, is always a sublime spectacle. It seems the fragment of a world, rent from its parent sphere and left to form a new world in the far unpeopled void, a world of new elements and new hopes, a star of

happy omen among the frowning planets of an elder line.

There was much to justify the expectation which accompanied our fathers to these shores, and the progress of the settlement did not disappoint them. Every year helped to fulfil them, and gave hope of still further fulfilment. If we compare the condition of these colonies, from their first settlement until the revolution which separated them from the mother-country, with the condition of Europe during the same period, we shall find that there was ample ground for encouragement and hope. On the one hand, we behold the regular operation of better principles of government, resulting in a rapid increase of wealth, population, and political importance, in the preservation of peace and religious order, and in the formation of a national character unexampled for its moral purity and strength. On the other hand, all is confusion, corruption, and war. In England, at this time, public profligacy had reached an unprecedented height, and a civil discord commenced, which, after wasting and distracting the kingdom for half a century, was succeeded by an iniquitous warfare with other nations. And what was the condition of those nations? In the German Empire a war of thirty years, involving Sweden and Italy in its course, had made desolate the hearts and homes of a once mighty but now crushed and suffering people. Spain, for two centuries the queen of Europe, but enfeebled and exhausted by vain struggles with protestant principles, became embroiled, and embroiled all Europe in a ruinous contest, respecting the allotment of her crown.

In France, during the very year which witnessed the birth of your institution, there was born a prince* never to be forgotten in the annals of false glory; a monarch, to whose illjudged policy and unprincipled ambition, may be traced the subsequent struggles and sufferings, the bloody contests and ever-recurring ruptures of that unhappy nation. In short, during the century and a half which elapsed, from the settlement of New-England to the American revolution, Europe enjoyed not ten successive years of peace. Meanwhile, a very different scene was acted in this new hemisphere, a beautiful episode in an age of confusion and strife. With the exception of those involuntary hostilities, which their precarious connection with the native tribes, and their more precarious connection with the mother-country forced upon them, war was unknown in these colonies. It will be urged that this exemption arose from the absence of those complicated relations and conflicting interests, which provoke war in older and more peopled parts of the world. Much, certainly, must be allowed to the want of provocation; but it cannot be denied that our fathers, even in that rude age, had imbibed and cherished pacific principles. This is evident, even in their intercourse with the native tribes, towards whom, notwithstanding their hostilities, they often exercised a forbearance not usually witnessed under similar circumstances. Neither can it be denied that the position, in which the rival col-

* Louis XIV. was born in the year 1638, — the A. & H. A. Company was chartered during the same year.

onies stood in relation to each other, presented temptations, which, had the character of the first settlers been less pacific, might have led to those aggressions and acts of hostility, which darken the first records of all states. What has been the early history of other nations? "The first accounts," says Mr. Burke, "which we have of mankind, are so many accounts of their butcheries. All empires are cemented in blood; and in those early periods, when the race of mankind began first to form themselves into parties and combinations, the first effect of the combination, and indeed the end, for which it seems formed and best calculated, is their mutual destruction."*

That our Fathers had faults, and were sometimes betrayed into unjustifiable actions, it would be absurd to deny. Their intolerance in religious matters, their persecution of all who swerved from the rule of faith which they had adopted, are sufficiently notorious. But these morning shadows in the character of the colonists dwindled and disappeared as the day of their history advanced; and it is worthy of note, that the first practical exhibitions of universal toleration, under Christian governments, were witnessed in this quarter of the globe.

It appears, then, that there was much in the early condition of these colonies to justify the expectations which we may suppose to have been entertained concerning them: there was much to authorize the hope that, with them, a new and better manifestation of

* "Vindication of natural society." Although this work is ironical in its design, a large portion of its statements are literally true.

humanity was to begin. And how, it may be asked, has this hope been fulfilled? What manifestations have yet appeared to confirm these pious expectations? If they were expectations based on just views of the nature, capacity, and destination of man, —no vague dreams of millennial perfection, to be accomplished in the twinkling of an eye, but a rational looking for of gradual progress in the knowledge and application of natural and revealed truth, and a gradual increase of the prosperity, temporal and spiritual, accruing therefrom, —if this was their character, they certainly have been fulfilled, if not to so great an extent as enthusiasm might desire, yet as fully as reason could demand. It is not my purpose to trace this fulfilment through the various stages of modern reform, nor to show, by minute details, how much the world is indebted to this nation for all that is best and most auspicious in the present aspect of things. So far as moral improvement is concerned, this will be allowed by all. It cannot be denied that all the great moral movements of the day, the abolition of slavery, the instruction of the poor, the suppression of vice, the reformation of prison discipline, and the first systematic efforts to promote universal peace, have either originated or received their strongest impulse here; and the fact augurs well for the future prospects of our country.

To these future prospects my subject points. The expectation of mankind still waiteth for new and further manifestations. The work of social improvement is but begun; indeed all that we can do in this matter must be considered only as a beginning.

The great principle unfolded in the Protestant reformation was the necessity of further reformation. The danger of the Romish church consisted not so much in any false dogmas, as in the fundamental error of its infallibility, and the notion springing therefrom that reformation was unneeded. Improvement, continued, endless improvement was the signal given three hundred years ago, and it is now beginning to be heard and interpreted to the full extent of its deep significance. Efforts for the improvement of the physical and moral condition of mankind are the leading characteristics of the times. A thousand philanthropic spirits are engaged in ministrations of charity which embrace the world in their broad designs. The welfare of man is understood at length to be the true object of human ambition. Whether it is equally well understood what the welfare of man requires, may be questioned: and still more questionable is it, whether the means employed to effect this object are the best that could be devised, or whether, allowing them to be the best, they are not liable to many serious objections. I allude particularly to the system of public combination, concerning which, I may be allowed, in passing, to offer a few remarks. This mode of action has manifest advantages: it secures the co-operation of many who would do little or nothing individually. But are there no dangers attending it? Are not its unspiritual character and mechanical tendency to be feared? A public association is nothing more nor less than a machine. An association for benevolent purposes is a benevolent machine. Whatever proceeds from it is

mechanical. It tends to beget and to disseminate mechanical views of moral and spiritual objects. Falling in with the popular philosophies of the day and with the tendencies of an age absorbed in mechanical projects, — tendencies which Christian philanthropy ought rather to counteract than to encourage; co-operating with these, it draws the attention of men from the real though invisible sources of improvement and fixes it on the formal manifestation, leading them to believe that the visible engine is the real power. It disqualifies us from seeking in our own hearts the issues of life, and disposes us to think that salvation is from abroad, and that to make all men wise, good and happy, requires nothing more than a perfectly organized society. If there is any one truth which it is more important for men to know than another, it is this, that all moral good, all that is essentially true and lasting, all on which we can depend for this life or the life to come, must spring up within ourselves, — that the best and holiest in human destiny cannot be communicated from without, but if attained at all, must be attained by personal efforts, by the quiet and wholesome action of the mind upon itself; an action to which suggestions from without may prompt but which they can never create. This salutary truth is not only not acknowledged in this mode of action, but it is virtually denied.

There is this danger also in public associations, that they tend to supplant individual action. One reason of their popularity is the apology which they furnish for throwing off the burden of individual re-

sponsibility. It is so much easier to warm one's self in the general heat of a popular excitement, than to kindle the sacred fire of charity by secret musing; it is so much pleasanter to act by means of an agent, than to act by private conversation and example; it is so much more flattering to vanity to attend a public meeting and to pronounce a public speech, than to visit alone the ignoble retreats of poverty and to waylay wretchedness in its secret hiding places; it is so much cheaper to contribute a few dollars annually to as many societies, than to meet the daily demands of charity; that the preference given to this mode of action is not at all surprising. But if it be an easier, cheaper and pleasanter method of doing good, it is a far less profitable one. Granting even, what is by no means certain, that the objects of charity are more speedily accomplished thus, those objects are too dearly purchased, at the expense of that moral advantage which flows from personal efforts and sacrifices. Individual efforts, *as far as they go*, are always and necessarily more beneficial than the operations of a body. The good which may be accomplished by the agent of a society, however faithful that agent, is limited to the exact amount of time and money spent; but the good which proceeds from the spontaneous movements of individual charity, is not to be measured by this gauge; it is not to be measured by any gauge; it passes all computation. It is not the deed done, the benefit conferred, or the evil removed, that can express the value of such acts — their visible good is as nothing compared with the moral consequences

with which they are blessed to the doer. They are genuine manifestations of the sons of God.

A still further objection to the system of combination is, that it destroys individuality of character, endangers freedom and independence of thought, and thereby retards the progress of truth. Truth is not elicited by popular excitement, nor discovered in public discussions. It is to be found only in selfcommunion, in the private study of ourselves and of God. And it is not to be found there, unless the mind acts with perfect freedom and originality, unbiassed by party associations, unprejudiced by public opinion. This freedom is rarely to be met with in those who have leagued themselves with numerous associations. The habit of acting only in conjunction with large bodies tends to enfeeble and enslave the mind. It disqualifies us for independent thought and action; it disposes us to receive the opinions and principles of the body to which we belong, as our own opinions and principles; it induces us to co-operate with that body in measures which our unbiassed judgment would not approve. There is a tacit pledge, an unconscious obligation to do so, which few have self-knowledge enough to perceive or firmness enough to resist. Right views and a sound morality are attainable only by a nature which knows itself and which acts from principles itself has established, without regard to public opinion or public example. Such natures are as little prone to follow blindly in the steps of the multitude when they happen to be treading a right path, as when they are moving in a wrong direction: they seek their motives of action within themselves; they seek the right because it is right, never asking and never

caring whether it is practised by others or not. It is only by such principles that a manly character or indeed any character can be formed. Habits of action into which we are led by the influence of example, however good, are not *moral*, — can never constitute a character. He who acts on principles derived from others, who sacrifices his individuality to the opinions and the will of a party *has no character*, he is merely a reflection of the character of some leading mind.

These are only a few of the objections to which this mode of action is liable. I might speak of the danger of political abuse, of the time lost in public meetings, of the unwholesome excitement they create and the evils accruing therefrom; but I forbear to enlarge on this topic. I would not be understood to condemn all combinations for philanthropic purposes. I cannot so mistrust, I dare not so contradict the universal sentiment of the age in which I live. I know too well, that public associations have been productive of much good and that they are necessary instruments in the great work of improvement. Were they more dangerous even, and less efficacious than I have supposed them, they would still be entitled to our grateful consideration, if not as a means of doing good, at least as a splendid proof of the good that is intended, as a full and glorious manifestation of the principles and purposes of the age. I only desire that there may be moderation in the application of this system of action, and that the dangers attending it may be well understood.

Our attention is next called to the *objects* contem-

plated in the philanthropic movements of the day. I shall confine myself to that one, the consideration of which seems most appropriate to this occasion, I mean the *abolition of war*.

The project of a universal peace is certainly the most sublime, but it is certainly also, the most difficult of modern enterprizes, if indeed it be not altogether hopeless. It is difficult, because it aims to suppress, not a constant but an occasional evil, an evil which, as it is not always and every where felt, will not be likely to engage the general interest and attention of mankind. It is difficult, moreover, because it attacks, not a *simple* propensity or custom, but a mischief so complicated, and occurring in such different forms, that it is almost impossible to say precisely where the evil lies, or to fix on a suitable point of attack. It is difficult, yet again, because the evil in question cannot be met by any general argument; each particular case requires an argument of its own, and when that case occurs, it is mostly too late, under the influence of a general excitement, for any argument to have its just weight. And above all, this project is difficult, because, in most countries, its success does not rest immediately with the people, but depends on governments, and because those who are most instrumental in creating the evil, are for the most part beyond the reach of moral influence. Other schemes address themselves immediately to rational and well disposed men, who have the power to remove the evils to be remedied, because they are presently existing evils and may be immediately met. But the attempt to abolish

war has peculiar hindrances to contend with. The difficulty is, not that the evils of war are not sufficiently known, or that the iniquity of war is not understood, but that those who make war are for the most part too little influenced by moral considerations to care for the evils they inflict or the guilt they incur. It is not that they need to be enlightened or reformed on this point, but on all points. The reformation is to be effected, not by urging this particular point of Christian morality, but by creating a disposition in rulers to obey the moral law in all points, and by placing those in office (where it can be done) who have this disposition. Whenever kings and rulers shall act under the control of Christian principles, wars will cease, and probably not till then. To abolish war, then, is to inculcate religion. A society for the promotion of peace is a society for the diffusion of religious principles. The whole Christian church is such a society. Every preacher of religion is a preacher of peace.

In order to appreciate fully the difficulty of effecting a general and permanent peace, in order to understand what it is that we propose to accomplish, we must consider well, how strong and how universal the passion for war has been in all ages of the world. This passion is one of the most remarkable phenomena in human nature. So prevalent, so unremitting has it been, that an English philosopher* of some repute was led to declare war to be the natural state of man. And truly, it would seem

*Hobbes.

as if there were some foundation for this belief ; at least it is not difficult to conceive how a philosopher, *reasoning from facts and not from principles*, should adopt such an opinion. It cannot be denied that war has ever been the most common employment and condition of nations. Seasons of peace are but brief interludes in the solemn tragedy of the world. As far back as we can trace the history of man we find him struggling with his fellow-man. The first use which he made of his godlike faculties was to forge implements of destruction. The sword was an earlier invention than the ploughshare ; the bow and the spear have ever preceded the scythe and the spade ; and the clods of the earth were removed to make room for the first fruits of slaughter ere ever a furrow was opened to receive the seed of the husbandman. But little has come down to us of the mighty men of old but the record of their splendid homicides. We see them at the head of immense armies, sweeping the earth like the breath of the pestilence, withering every green hope, and devouring the ungathered harvests. They toiled for glory, and glory was theirs — the glory of the lightning, which shatters where it shines. The heroes of antiquity, the kings of Egypt, of Assyria, of Persia, and of Macedonia, — what do we know of them, but how many thousands they led forth to battle and how few hundreds returned with the boast of victory. Victory ! — well did the Roman annalist describe it : “ A scene where profound and universal silence reigns, funeral mounds on every side ; distant and rare the smoke of human habitations ; no one to greet the eye

of the wanderer.”* It might be supposed that so rude a pastime would have been relished only in a rude age and by an ignorant people, but polished Athens and stately Rome partook of its pleasures with as keen a gust as the nations whom they pronounced barbarous. It might have been supposed that Christianity would have set bounds to the tide of blood; but the progress of Christian civilization has thus far only added new importance, new skill and new efficacy to the art of war. It is no longer the rude thing it was in the hands of Xerxes or Hamilcar; it has been exalted to a graver beauty and adorned with a terrible grace: dignified with the honors of a science, and enriched with the choicest results of modern invention. The advancement of society, so far from diminishing, has increased the frequency of wars. The last two centuries have abounded more in this cruel custom than any two previous centuries of the world’s history. And even now, Christian Europe, bowed with the weight of years, grown grey in old campaigns, and scarred with thousand battles, still clutches the sword with her veteran and palsied hands as eagerly as she grasped it in the days of her youth. History has been censured for speaking only of conquerors and of battles; but in truth, history has had little else to record. The arts of peace have always hid themselves in obscurity: the progress of human improvement has been always a secret stream revealing itself only by the superior fertility of the regions through which it passed: while all that ap-

* *Vastum ubique silentium, secreti colles; fumantia procul tecta, nemo exploratoribus obvis. Tacitus.*

pears on the surface, all that is obvious to the historian, the great current of human affairs has been red with war from its source until now.

“War,” says Machiavel ought to be the only study of a prince, he ought to consider peace merely as a breathing time, which gives him leisure to contrive, and furnishes the ability to execute military plans.”* This writer is supposed by some to have spoken in bitter irony of the principles which *did* prevail, rather than of those which *should* obtain.† Whatever may have been the design of *this* statement, its truth is undeniable. War *has* been the chief study and employment of princes; and peace, but a brief breathing time, not only in the ruder ages and regions of the world, but in civilized nations and in modern times. When we look over the records of modern history from the beginning of the thirty years’ war to the Congress of Aix la Chapelle, we are surprised to find how little of this “*breathing time*” has been allowed to the struggling and exhausted nations. And this surprise increases when we consider what small temptations, what contemptible motives have induced nations to take up arms, and what trifling advantages have resulted from their contests. I speak not now of the wars of defence, which are grounded on the most obvious principles of our nature, nor of the wars of ambition, which are mere madness; but of those wars of policy, of interference, which constitute a large proportion of modern hostilities. Take, for

* This passage is quoted from Burke. I do not remember to have met with the words in Machiavel, but the doctrine they teach may be found in the 21st chapt. of “*The Prince*.”

† See Spinoza. *Tractat Polit*, chap. v. sect. vii.

example, the Spanish war of succession which occurred at the beginning of the last century. This contest, famous for the victories of Marlborough and Eugene, celebrated in that poem which raised Sir Joseph Addison to his high office,* and made ridiculous by one of the severest satires in our language,† may be regarded as a fair specimen of European warfare. The question at issue was, which of two rival claimants, the one a relative of France, the other a descendant of Austria, should inherit the throne of Spain, successively assigned to both by the will of the last monarch of the line of Hapsburg. This question, one would think, could have been particularly interesting only to the subjects of that kingdom; or, at most, to the respective countries of the rival candidates. But the *balance of Europe*, that imaginary equipoise, that vainest of political fancies, to which so many millions have been sacrificed, was at stake. Kings know too well the infirmity of royal natures, to permit the temptation, which a slight preponderance of wealth or territory might present to a brother monarch, if by any means, such inequality can be prevented. Accordingly, not only did Spain, France and Austria, rush to arms on this question, but England, Holland, Sicily and Portugal, Bavaria and the German empire took sides and girded on the harness. A long and ruinous conflict ensued; many hard fields were fought and many precious lives were lost. Eleven thousand, it is stated, fell in the single battle of

* Addison's "campaign" was written by order of the Lord Treasurer Godolphin and was the means of obtaining that nobleman's patronage. See *Life of Addison in the British Plutarch*.

† History of John Bull by Arbuthnot.

Blenheim. For more than ten years the contest raged. In vain the French monarch, exhausted, impoverished and intimidated, sued for peace and offered to purchase it with the most humiliating concessions.* His suit was obstinately refused, till at last, an accident decided the controversy. The death of Joseph I. placed one of the rival candidates on the throne of Austria, and left the other undisputed monarch of Spain. Yet even here, England's share in the contest might not have ended. The English general, enriched by spoil, and elated by the popularity of conquest, wished still to prolong it; but happily his influence at court began to decline; the opposite party, — the advocates of peace, rose in favor: at length, the policy of Queen Anne,† — or, as some will have it, a pair of gloves, and a glass of water, or a cup of tea spilt in an unfortunate moment by the Duchess of Marlborough, — changed the ministry of England, and the peace of Utrecht was accomplished. What then had this long struggle effected? To the determination of the question at issue, it contributed absolutely nothing; but without consequences of some kind it could not terminate, "War," says Mr. Burke, "leaves never where it found a nation."‡ How did this war leave the nations of Europe? To England, by dint of usurpation, it secured some important maritime advantages; but to France and Spain it was

"The work of ages sunk in one campaign,
And lives of millions sacrificed in vain."||

* See Bp. Burnet's history of his own times.

† See Herder's "Begebenheiten und Charaktere des vergangenen Jahrhunderts." (Events and Characters of the past century.)

‡ Letters on a Regicide Peace.

|| See Addison's "Campaigne."

In the latter of these nations the population had dwindled from eleven to eight millions, and in the former, the foundation was laid of those national burdens and embarrassments which afterward resulted in the French revolution. Such was the expense of settling the question whether the King of a certain country should be called Philip or Charles. Is it to be wondered at, that any one, in view of facts like these, the frequency of wars, and the trifling motives with which they have been waged, should adopt the opinion that war is the natural state of man? And, in a certain sense, this opinion is correct. It is natural to man to err, to sin. It is natural to him to obey the impulses of passion, rather than the dictates of reason, — to carry his designs by brute force rather than by manly counsel. Man has an *animal* nature; and when he acts in conformity with that nature, it is not wonderful that he should fight like other animals. Besides, *opposition* appears to be one of the fundamental laws of creation; there is conflict in all the Kingdoms of nature. It would seem as if the author of the universe had designed that its movements should be regulated, not by the harmonious operation of kindred elements, but by the action and reaction of antagonist forces. So far, therefore, as man partakes of the nature of the material universe, conflict is natural to him. But man has a higher nature, a moral and a spiritual nature. And what if here too the same principle of opposition exists? Then, indeed, we cannot expect that controversy will ever wholly cease, any more than that all men will think and feel alike. But the form

which controversy has hitherto assumed, the carnal conflicts, the wars and fightings to which it has led, may cease, and must cease, and will cease, whenever man shall have developed his higher nature, and have learned to act in conformity with it. War is not the natural state of man. It is only man's fallen, unregenerate nature that can endure such a state. The doctrine might be true, had we no other destination than that which we share in common with the grovelling and perishing brutes: but if, on the one hand, we are allied to them, we are, on the other hand, more intimately allied with the moral creation, and in view of this alliance, the doctrine is impious. It is high treason against the majesty of the soul. It is blasphemy against God. Peace, and not war, is the natural state of man; for we have a nature made for moral progress, and moral progress tends to peace.

It need not be denied that wars have had their use. In the beautiful economy of Providence, which converts all things into blessings, they have been made productive of manifold good. They have doubtless helped to unfold some important principles of our nature, they have brought man into closer contact with man, and thus advanced the great interests of humanity. This however, does not diminish their criminality, — the criminality of the passions which led to them. Because God causeth "the wrath of man to praise him," wrath is not therefore the less iniquitous, because, kinder to us than we to ourselves, he unfolds good from our evil, we are not therefore justified in evil. Besides,

though war has been indirectly productive of good, the immediate good, which they who engaged in war have proposed to themselves, has seldom or never been attained. This is especially true of the wars of policy. The principle on which such hostilities proceed, the real, though not avowed principle, is that might makes right, that justice is always on the side of strength, and that the sword is the great arbiter in human affairs. They are genuine relics of the ancient club law. But when was justice ever established by force? when was right ever made clear by arms? or, when was the cause of mankind ever fairly heard, not to say adjudged in the stern chancery war?

It is a question yet undecided in the theories of moral philosophy, whether war is, in any form and under any circumstances, justifiable; whether those wars of defence even, which have most commonly been though allowable, are really consistent with the principles of Christian morality. A late able writer on this subject has argued from literal interpretations of scripture and from the assumption that war can never be waged against a nation which defends not itself, that this species of warfare is liable to the same condemnation which has been passed on every other.* The determination of this question must depend on the narrower or wider interpretation of those principles on which the whole subject rests. It is by principle, — by Christian principle, and not by prudential considerations of evil consequences, that this

* Dymond.

cause must be tried. By force of principle the abolition of war must be effected, if effected at all. It is in vain to urge consequences unless the great principle can be established that war is unchristian, — unchristian, not because it is productive of much mischief, not because it occasions loss of life and property, but because the motives and principles on which it is conducted are inconsistent with those which Christ inculcates. Much harm is done to the cause of peace by dwelling solely on the disastrous consequences of war, as if these were not sufficiently understood. The destruction of life, for example, is much insisted on. The destruction of life is bad, but it is not the worst of evils. The waste of property, the desolation of cities and villages, the ruin of families, the tears of widows and orphans are bad; but the sacrifice of justice, the abandonment of principle, the loss of a nation's rights are worse, unquestionably worse, infinitely worse; for these are the only things which make life worth having; and if these can be maintained only, and it be right to maintain them at the expense of life, who would not say let life be the price, let it be spent like water for their redemption.

Various methods have been devised for the arbitration of those international disputes, in which wars have for the most part originated. The amiable but somewhat visionary St. Pierre, the prime mover in the cause of peace, — he who declared the highest title that ambition could covet, to be that of "Pacifactor of Europe," — was the first to propose a court of appeal, consisting of several independent

governments, in which the questions at issue between contending nations should be tried. This scheme with various modifications, has lain at the foundation of all subsequent efforts for the prevention of war. The futility of such a project must be obvious. It has been tried. It was adopted, sixteen years since, by the five great powers assembled at the Congress of Aix la Chapelle, and sanctioned by all the solemn mockery of that occasion. But when, where, and in what degree has war been prevented by that self-constituted assize? Did it avert the heart rending and protracted agonies of Greece? Did it stop the briefer, but more fatal catastrophe of Poland? Is there, throughout the world, a nation that will thank its mediation? How indeed, can such a compact be other than nugatory? The very principle which it assumes, the right of interference, will never be allowed, and must therefore, be ever hostile to peace. It supposes a willingness on the part of other nations to submit to its authority, and in case of their resistance, leaves no resource but war. It will hardly stop the march of a conqueror, and it will never silence those passions whence wars and fightings come.

I have said that permanent peace can be secured only by the gradual prevalence of religious principle. Meanwhile however, something may be done in a country like ours, by efforts directed especially to this sacred cause. It has been well observed by one of our most eminent writers* that republics are more

averse from war than other forms of government. Let this aversion be strengthened and deepened by steadily holding up to the public mind the great principles of peace. Let the beauty and the glory of these principles be contrasted with those false notions of military honor which for thousands of years have crazed the world. Let them, by conversation and example, be silently and gradually diffused through every branch of that power, with which, in this favored country, are the issues of peace and of war, — the only real power in any country, — the people. Who can tell how great the influence which a single people, persevering for years, through good report and evil report, in the maintenance and practice of pacific principles, and enjoying in and through the exercise of those principles, unexampled prosperity, may exert on the warworn and suffering nations of the older world.

Above all, let the full power of the Christian Church be turned against this evil, as it has been turned in our day against other and less antiquated evils. Let Christianity exercise over the hearts of rulers and of people, that subduing, pity-moving influence, by which, in former times, she has so often stayed the hand of violence and lightened the load of mortal woe. In that dark period, when society was weak, and individual man was strong, when passion, unchecked by authority, unsoftened by custom, ruled and wasted the earth, there grew up a custom of referring all questions to the decision of the sword. Success in battle was held to be a sign from God, an unanswerable evidence of the justice of the vic-

* See an Oration delivered at Cambridge, on the fourth of July, 1826, by Hon. E. Everett.

tor's cause. No wonder that battles became the established order of the day. Christianity, pitying this sad waste of life, yet unable wholly to suppress the evil, obtained from the diets and councils of that period, the important privilege of suspending the work of destruction during all the festivals of the year and during three days of every week. The armistice thus obtained was called the "Truce of God." Christianity has lost the authority of edicts and of councils, but she possesses a moral power, no whit less mighty, it is hoped, than she wielded then : a power which waits not for prince's consent or bishop's sanction, which has for its organ no solemn conclave of hierarchs, but the unbidden council of public opinion, from whose decision there is no appeal. Let us hope that the time is coming when this power, directed against public warfare, as it was then directed against private feud, shall effect, I will not say a truce of God, but a universal peace of God : a peace not limited to the formal festivals of the Church, but itself constituting a festival more beautiful than ever Church ordained : — even that high festival of peace and good will which angel voices foretold to the shepherds of Bethlehem, when they announced the infant God.

Gentlemen of the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company,

I have not hesitated, though addressing a military body, to plead in your presence the cause of peace. Nor will you, I am sure, consider the argument an insult to your banners or a reproach upon your arms.

I am persuaded that your sentiments on this subject accord with my own. The founders of your institution entertained no other. While, with a dim forecast of the struggles which awaited their country, they provided the necessary defence against the evil day, they were not unmindful of the apostolic injunction, to "seek peace and ensue it." In perpetuating their ordinance, it has been your object rather to preserve one of the fast-fading memorials of those great and good men, than to cherish a warlike spirit. If ever you are called to take up the sword, may it be with no other purpose than that high one so beautifully indicated in the motto affixed to the arms of this Commonwealth,—the maintenance of liberty and the peace which liberty secures.* In speaking to you of peace, I have considered it only as one of the consequences of that progress toward perfection, in which, as I love to believe, society is moving onward with sure though measured steps. There are some who would persuade us that unlimited improvement is not the destination of man. I rejoice in a happier faith. I believe that not only the individual man, in the infinite capacities of his immortal nature, but social man, — the everchanging family of successive generations, — is destined to grow, without end, in knowledge power and happiness. That happy era of redeemed and perfected humanity, so earnestly expected, so long foretold, is no baseless vision, it is already drawing nearer, and though neither this generation, nor this century be permitted

* "Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem."

to witness its brightness, Heaven and earth shall not pass until it be accomplished, until every evil that does not necessarily spring from mortal imperfection be done away; until the "earnest expectation of the creature" be satisfied, and the world filled with the bright "manifestation of the sons of God."

OFFICERS
OF THE
ANCIENT AND HONOURABLE
ARTILLERY COMPANY,
FOR THE YEAR 1833.

COL. EDWARD G. PRESCOTT, *Captain.*
LT. COL. ROBERT C. WINTHROP, *1st. Lieut.*
LT. COL. PETER DUNBAR, *2d. Lieut.*
MAJOR LOUIS DENNIS, *Adjutant.*